
## DUST AND ASHES.

For the touch of your cool white hand
and slim,
For the brush of your bronze-gold hair
Across my lips, what wouldn't I give?
What would I? The world is fair,
The slopes are green and the bird's song
thrills
As sweet as it used to do;
But it isn't as sweet as it was to me
In the days when I walked with you.

And never in field or glen or hill,
Or down by the bayou's brink,
Is the glamour the world once held for
me;
The cattle wend down to drink,
And the jasmine nods as if drunk with
dew,
And the clover perfume blows
As faint and far and sweet as then,
When the doors of the night unclose.

And I know that the world is the beautiful thing
That it used to be. Last night
I met a maid and a youth afar
In the afterglow; so light
I stepped aside that they saw me not,
Enamored they passed me by,
And just for a moment the old light
played
Transforming the sea and sky.

And so as I know that the world's the
same
I wish it may still exist,
But the glamour and thrall that it held
me in
Are gone, and the lips I kissed
I may kiss no more. And I walk alone
Where the perfumed nightwinds weep,
And I would I might give all the wide
wide world
For one more kiss—and sleep.
—J. M. Lewis, in Houston Post.

# The Iron Brigade

A STORY OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

By GEN. CHARLES KING

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CHAPTER IX.—CONTINUED.

For several days after his capture it had been Benton's belief that Paul was concealed in the room Rosalie declared hers at the Henry house—the room sacred to her stricken brother—and not until after their coming to Charlottesville was he undeceived. There, one afternoon, the week before he went away, the young confederate was moved to refer to the matter mainly by seeing that it was a subject of which Benton fought shy.

"I had been with Miss Chilton and poor Jack some hours that morning," said he, "for the guard never came in the front part of the house, but she had ordered me to go and get some sleep in the afternoon, it having been fully determined that I should make the attempt to escape that night. Lying there in a sort of cat nap toward five o'clock, I heard the soldiers speak your name and could not resist the longing to see you. Then when you turned back I knew you had come to search and had plenty of time to flatten out between the joists and pull my section of the floor over me. You stamped on my nose with your spurred boot-heel, Fred, and I never winced."

So that ghost was laid, at least as far as Rosalie was concerned! But how about the other—the far more significant and now mysterious freak of clothing herself in Paul's uniform and slipping through the darkness of night to the stone house? For whose sake had she so carefully disguised, yet recklessly exposed herself? Not even her father had been told as yet. He had so confided to Benton only a day or two after Paul's departure, and now, with her growing shyness, aversion, or whatever it might be toward him, little likelihood was there, thought Benton, of his learning the secret from her lips, and that, too, when he was beginning to feel that he must know.

Every day for hours he could pace up and down the pretty, home-like garden, listening to the low chatter in the arbor, or the soft, bubbling laughter when "Jack's girls" were there. Of course the story of all his kindness to the doctor had been told, otherwise his presence would have been insupportable. But some one had said he was very handsome, very silent, very interesting, and that he couldn't keep his big blue eyes off Rosalie, and so there was much curiosity mingling with the stately little curtseys each in turn accorded him.

This April evening as he sat at the window awaiting the doctor's coming to look at his arm before tea-time, his eyes were attracted by the sight of a certain broad-brimmed drab felt hat that he had noted more than once before that day, passing along the fence at the side of the house where the hedge was thick and high. Now Fred Benton saw distinctly much of the form and some of the face beneath it, and face and form were those of a young and slender girl. She lifted up her eyes and looked full at the captive Yankee; then stopped short, glanced hastily about her; took from the bosom of her gown a little white note; held it high that he should see it; turned and walked back to the gateway. One moment she held her note aloft again, then lowered her hand as though working vigorously at the bricks, and when a second time she uplifted the hand the note was gone. Another moment and—so was she. Obviously, however, that girl wished him to mark the spot, then come down and get that note.

Not until the following morning came there opportunity. Then, while Jack in his latticed, vine-covered arbor was listening to the chatter of the new relief of his fair bodyguard, Benton stepped quickly to the gateway, and, after brief search, hauled aside a loose brick or two and found a tiny billet folded three-cornered, that when opened said:

"Be alert. Orders coming send you to Libby. Watch every morning and evening for further warning. Escape possible."

CHAPTER X.

LIBBY OR LIBERTY.

Then came three days of rain. And while McClellan's men were wallowing in the mud of the lower peninsula, held by the elements, not by the enemy—for Magruder's little force at Yorktown could not have stopped two divisions when led by a later day general of the Army of the Potomac—here about Charlottesville the wooded heights were draped in filmy mist, the mountain streams ran bank full, and Jack Chilton's bodyguard came on duty with blooming, rain-kissed cheeks.

Rosalie, secretly disturbed about her captive, as the girls called him, professed to think Mr. Benton ought to be glad to come downstairs and watch Brother Jack being worshipped—"it ought to make any man better to see how Virginia girls honor a Virginia soldier stricken while battling for his native state." Bull Run victims were few and far between now—either were they dead or again on duty—and Virginia girls by the hundred were longing to lavish smiles and sweetness and soothing potions, all in one, on Virginia lads shot or sabered in their defense. Time was soon, and far too soon, to come when every house and every room should be filled with the sore stricken, and there could be nowhere near enough girls to go around; but just now, in April, Charlottesville had but three wounded Southrons and one "Yank," and to the foremost of these Southrons all but a corps d'elite of Miss Chilton's choosing were denied admission. As to the Yank, no one of their number dare let another know how gladly would her charity have been extended—even to him. Of course, however, that was merely through curiosity.

No. Fred Benton was chafing, restless and unhappy, and, even now that Paul was gone, again suffering the pangs of jealousy. A tall confederate officer, a very distinguished looking major of the staff, had called thrice in

DARTED PAST HIM.

two days, and had had long conversation with the little lady of the house—one, in fact, behind closed doors after Jack had been "toted" to his room. Fred heard the colored house of commons discussing the pros and cons as to that indication, and in like manner ascertained that the officer was Maj. Lounsberry—long a resident of Albemarle and now of the staff—the inspector's department of the confederate army, and Fred could have sworn his pretty jailor was in tears when she came hurrying up from one interview. Morning and evening both had he watched for the return of the lady of the broad-brimmed felt, but the rain or something had been too much for her, and she failed to reappear. Maj. Lounsberry's deep voice, however, was heard in the broad lower hall three hours after his long afternoon interview with Miss Chilton, and the doctor came briskly forth from his study to greet and welcome the distinguished representative of the war office—the son of an old familiar friend. There was good news from Yorktown, it seems, and small Pomp brought it in with a little pitcher of cool buttermilk and some "cohn pone" for Marse Benton—"De Yankees done got licked agin down by Yohktown." "Marse Lounsberry" had so told the doctor, and Fred went down to Jack's room, his arm still slung, to wish him good-night and learn what he knew. Rosalie departed and left them to each other, and it happened that as the doctor was ushering his martial visitor from his study to the door full 15 minutes later, and long before Benton's usual hour for retiring, the door to Jack's room opened and the Yankee lieutenant came forth, looking very tall, erect and by no means broken down.

The doctor gave a start—an unmistakable glance of warning. A crouching bundle of femininity near the head of the stairs, out of Lounsberry's sight but plainly in Benton's view, frantically signalled with both impetuous hands—with wild eyes and wide-opening mouth gasping dismay—the imperious order to go back at once, but obtusely Benton stood his ground and faced, half defiantly, this new visitor, who in turn stopped short and calmly, even somewhat insolently, surveyed him. The major was the first to speak.

"Lieut. Benton, I presume," said he "and looking vastly better than I had been led to—hope." How near he there came to saying "believe!"

"Looking quite well, my dear major," hastily interposed the doctor, "yet, I assure you, but the ghost of the fine young fellow who rescued me that night at Centerville. It will be months before he can handle a sabre again."

"How about a pen?" asked Lounsberry, significantly, his eyes burning into Benton's gaze as though striving to read his innermost thoughts.

"Mr. Benton has certainly managed to write three home letters—left-handed," answered Dr. Chilton, speaking for his captive guest, yet glancing nervously toward him. "They were duly forwarded to Richmond to be censored. Was it there you saw them, Maj. Lounsberry?"

"I had reference to possibilities, doctor, though I am not acquainted with the lieutenant's left hand-writing. It would be injudicious, for instance, not to say ungrateful to those who have shielded him, were he to answer the letter he found at the old side gate of the garden, Monday evening!"

The hot blood leaped to Benton's face. Lounsberry had spoken with the cool deliberation of one absolutely sure of his ground. The doctor turned and stood gazing at his guest as though expecting him promptly to deny the imputation. From the stairway came the sound of faint rustle as though Rosalie shrank still further away, and Benton felt, rather than saw that her eyes were fixed upon him in mingled scrutiny and indignation. The silence was painful and Benton broke it.

"There was nothing new in the note, doctor," said he, purposely ignoring the staff officer. "It was to tell me—what I already suspected and, since this gentleman's arrival, have felt sure of—that I was to be sent to Richmond. Do not let it worry you. I have been preparing for it, and now I am quite ready to go."

For the life of him as the sentence closed he could not avoid shooting one swift glance at the stairway to note the effect of his words. The major saw, turned and finding that from where he stood the landing and stairway were hidden from view, stepped quickly forward. Benton instantly did the same, and almost breast to breast they met there in the middle of the room—the blue and the gray—the fire flashing in the eyes of each. There was the sound of whisking drapery, a soft swish along stair and balcony rail, and in an instant Rosalie had darted to the landing and out of sight. A half smile, contemptuous and cutting, played about the confederate's lips. He gave no sign whatever that he had heard. He addressed himself to Benton:

"I presume you have burned that note, sir, and therefore have nothing with which to back your statement, but I take you at your word. You are ready to go, you say; be ready to start then at six in the morning."

"My dear major!" broke in Dr. Chilton. "Surely you——"

"Those are my orders, doctor. I have no volition," answered Lounsberry, coldly. "And now if I may say adieu to Jack I'll leave you to such preparation as may be necessary. The guard will call for Mr. Benton at six. I go myself to Gordonsville to-night."

With that Maj. Lounsberry turned haughtily away, as though the possibility of further talk with a federal prisoner was something intolerable. The doctor, stunned and silent, looked helplessly from one to the other, and again it was Benton who spoke a reassuring word. Cordially he held forth his one free hand.

"It's all right, doctor," said he. "You and Miss Chilton have pulled me round famously. I can stand Libby diet now just as well as anybody, and I'm betting on speedy exchanges. Then—our fellows will be doing something now," he added, with significant smile. "Who knows but they may gather in game as big as that!" with a laughing nod toward the resplendent major. "Or, is he, like so many of our staff, only for duty at the rear?" And Benton meant that Lounsberry should hear, and hear he did and flushed red under the taunt.

"Do not judge our methods by the little you know of yours, Mr. Benton," he retorted, albeit with admirable self-control. Then, as though again determined to ignore the northerner, "may I be permitted a word with Lieut. Chilton, doctor?" a question which seemed to recall the doctor to himself and left Benton to his own devices. Without another glance at the unwelcome visitor, the latter turned and ascended the stairs to the second story, and there, in the dim light of a night lamp, by the eastward window, stood the girl he longed to see and speak with, and she who had avoided, now came half timidly forward as though to meet him.

From the neighborhood of her aunt's door and her own, and close to the westward windows Rosalie Chilton silently led her captive soldier, and then turned, her face pale and sorrow-stricken, her great dark eyes filling with unshed tears.

"I have a confession to make, Mr. Benton," said she, at length. "Do you think—it's easy for a girl to say—she's glad to find that she was wrong?"

"Something has seemed to me very wrong of late," answered Benton, "so much so I was glad to get away on any terms, even to Libby. For what have I been punished?"

"I shall tell you—frankly," she answered, standing with downcast eyes before him, her white hands loosely clasping. "Do you know, I thought—I heard—that you were plotting with people outside to escape, and, father being responsible for you, it seemed ungrateful—indeed dishonorable——"

"But what on earth have I said or done to warrant the belief? I have talked with no one, communicated with no one, except that, after I had noted your cold and distant manner, there came this little unsigned note, saying that I was to be sent to Richmond. I have never answered it. I haven't an idea who sent it."

"But the note——" and now she looked up eagerly, "you have it—still?"

"Burned it to ashes the hour it came!" he answered.

"But you saw who brought it—or who left it?"

"I saw—" he impulsively began, then stopped short. What right had he, a union soldier, to give information against some possible union lover in their midst, one who was seeking to be of service to him at that?

"Oh, you needn't say!" cried Miss Chilton, with a curl of her lip. "We know—at least I know—the girl! What we heard, or at least I heard, a week ago was that you—that they, that—oh, I can't explain—I can't go on!" she said, and now burning blushes, to his amaze, suffused her face and she covered it with her hands.

Then voices were heard below stairs—the doctor showing the major from Jack's room to the door, ceremonious and courtly even when aggrieved.

"He will wish to see me—perhaps you, too—at once," suddenly exclaimed Miss Chilton, starting impulsively forward. "I just want to know that—that what I now believe is true, and to be able to say so confidently to father and perhaps to—to others. You had not thought of trying to escape so long as you were with us?" And for an instant the dark, glorious eyes looked full into his face, then fell before the intensity of his.

"On my word, Miss Chilton—no!"

"Then—then," she vehemently cried, "I don't care how soon you do try—now!" and with that she darted past him to her own room and presently the doctor's slow step was heard ascending the stairs.

It was late that night and the moon had dipped beyond the Blue Ridge when, after a family talk in Jack's room, they separated. Not another chance had Benton to speak to Rosalie, but for good and sufficient reason he had found her actions of most unusual interest. Pale and silent, absorbed in thought, she had taken little part in the conference. Twice she stole softly to the window, drew aside the curtain and peered through the outer darkness; then, while her father was earnestly talking, she seated herself close to the curtains, and Benton, watching her with devouring eyes, saw that she was listening intently for sounds, signals, something from without and paying little heed to what was said within. Then, he could not be mistaken, there came a low tap, tap on the pane. Rosalie quickly, silently drew the shade aside enough to enable her to give one answering tap, and a moment later she stole quietly out of the room, while the doctor was still talking, and, when she returned nearly half an hour later, there were drops of water on her rippling hair.

By this time between the Chiltons, father and son, it had been determined that every influence should at once be brought to bear at Richmond to bring about Benton's exchange—Fred himself agreeing to write urgent letters to friends in front of Washington. Already quite a number of officers and men had been returned from Libby, the first small boat-load having gone to the capital and been welcomed by the president himself before the winter's snows were swept entirely from the Virginia mountains. "Just one thing I fear," said the doctor, "that the same influence that dogged you here and led to the order for your delivery there, may pursue you at Richmond."

"And will you tell me what that is and why it should be so bitter?" asked Benton.

The doctor glanced uncertainly at the thinned face, flushing faintly even through the pallor of this long confinement, then turned to Rosalie. Quickly she again left her chair, hurried to the window and threw open the curtain as though to look forth into the night where all was apparently dark as Erebus.

"It is a family—jah, suh. I hardly understand it myself. But I'm bound to say that Maj. Lounsberry has fohfeited any claim he may have had upon my friendship. Now I must look to that bandage again before you retiah, suh." And thus closed the conference.

Not half an hour later young Pomp was nervously fidgeting about the room, on the customary plea of helping Marse Benton undress, when he rolled his big eyes thrice to the west window and finally said, with a chuckle:

"Marse Jack never thought nuthin' of swingin' out of that window when dis was his room 'for' de wah."

"Rather a high jump for a heavy man," suggested Benton, wondering to what this conversation might lead.

"Lawd, Marse Benton, you done fo'got de lightnin' rawd!"

Stepping to the window the lieutenant peered forth into the moist and windy night. Putting forth his hand he could feel, just to the left of the window, the stout, thick iron rod that Pomp had described.

Slowly, thoughtfully he closed the shade and returned to the dressing-table where stood the single candle. Pomp had vanished, but there, pinned to the cushion was the mate to the strange little billet he had found at the gate. Even the handwriting was the same:

"Horses, guide and everything you need waiting back of the barn. Lose not a moment! Choose between the mountains for a day or two or Libby for the rest of the war. Burn this, too."

[To Be Continued.]

**Of a Different Breed.**

Mifkins—According to the market reports hogs are scarce.

Bifkins—Oh, I guess not. I went into a barber shop last Saturday night to get shaved and there were three ahead of me waiting to have their hair cut.—Cincinnati Enquirer.